



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service
Northern Region R1

Custer National Forest
Sioux Ranger District
Carter County, Montana
Harding County, South Dakota

February 2003

Kraft Springs Fire Hazard Abatement and Restoration Project

Environmental Assessment



Prepared by: USDA-FS Enterprise T.E.A.M.S.
Boise Group
161 E. Mallard Drive, Suite A
Boise, Idaho. 83706



Kraft Springs Fire Hazard Abatement and Restoration Project

Environmental Assessment

February 2003

Location: Carter County, Montana
Harding County, South Dakota

Lead agency: USDA Forest Service
Custer National Forest
Sioux Ranger District

Responsible official: Nancy T. Curriden, Forest Supervisor
Custer National Forest

For further information: George Foley, District Ranger
Sioux Ranger District
P.O. Box 37
Camp Crook, South Dakota. 57724
Ph: (605) 797-4432
Fax:(605) 797-4404
Email: gfoley@fs.fed.us

Notice: Comments received in response to this document, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 or 217. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted, with or without name and address.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Organization of This Document

This EA is prepared according to the format established by Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508)

The document consists of the following sections:

Chapter I - Purpose and Need for Action

Describes the proposed action, the purpose and need for action, relationship to management direction, decisions to be made, and any relevant issues that would provide the basis for alternatives and the decision.

Chapter II - Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

Describes the range of alternatives considered in the analysis, and alternatives considered in detail. A comparison of alternatives concludes Chapter II. The comparison tables presented at the end of this chapter are a concise executive summary of the effects of the alternatives.

Chapter III – Environment and Effects

Describes the affected environment and focuses on the existing condition of resources that would be affected by the alternatives. The expected environmental consequences on resources within the project area are disclosed for each of the alternatives. Direct, indirect, and cumulative effects are predicted. Any expected, unavoidable adverse impacts are listed, including any irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources. Additionally, a list of the individuals who prepared or reviewed the document is presented and a literature citation section is listed.

Appendix A: Project Maps

Project maps for each alternative are grouped together for ease of viewing, printing and email/www distribution.

Appendix B: Supplemental Information

Additional analysis information referenced in the Environmental Assessment

Project Record

Additional documentation, reports, and analysis that are referenced in this document can be found in the project record files. These items have not been included in this document due to technical nature, excessive length, or are reference materials used to develop the analysis in this document. All supporting documents in the planning record are located at: Custer National Forest, Sioux Ranger District, P.O. Box 37, 101 SE First Street, Camp Crook, South Dakota. 57724. Phone 605-797-4432, Fax 605-797-4404

=====

Cover Photo: View of a timber stand burned by the Kraft Springs fire, resulting in a "stand replacing, high intensity wildfire, (Photo by G. Lind, FS TEAMS)

Table of Contents

Chapter I Purpose And Need.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.3 Purpose And Need For Action.....	5
1.4 Proposed Action In Brief.....	9
1.5 Relationship To Forest Plan And Other Management Direction	9
1.6 Public Involvement	11
1.7 Issues	13
1.7.1 Issues Studied In Detail	13
1.7.2 Issues Not Studied In Detail.....	16
1.8 Decision Framework.....	17
 Chapter II Alternatives.....	 19
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Alternative Development Process.....	19
2.3 Alternatives Considered But Eliminated From Detailed Study	20
2.4 Alternatives Considered In Detail	20
2.4.1 Alternative #1-No Action	21
2.4.2 Alternative #2-Proposed Action	21
2.4.3 Alternative #3-Noncommercial Fuel Reduction	26
2.5 Project Design Features And Monitoring	27
2.6 Comparison Of Alternatives	31
 CHAPTER III Environment And Effects	 39
3.1 Introduction.....	39
3.2 Fire And Fuels	40
3.3 Forest Vegetation	68
3.4 Watershed – Soils	82
3.5 Wildlife	96
3.6 Rare Plants.....	109
3.7 Range Resource.....	114
3.8 Heritage Resource.....	123
3.9 Visuals Resource.....	135
3.10 Recreation	139
3.11 Economics	144
3.12 Transportation System	153
3.13 Cumulative Effects Activities	159
3.14 Required Disclosures And Unique Characteristics	161
3.15 List Of Preparers	165
3.16 Consultation And Coordination.....	167
3.17 Literature Citations	168

Appendix A: Project Maps

Appendix B: Supplemental Information

B-1: Burn Intensity and Severity Definitions	Pg. B-2
B-2: Vegetation Cover Types Prescriptions	Pg. B-3
B-3: Beshta Report: Response to Concerns	Pg. B-4

Figure v-1a: Kraft Springs Project, general locale map

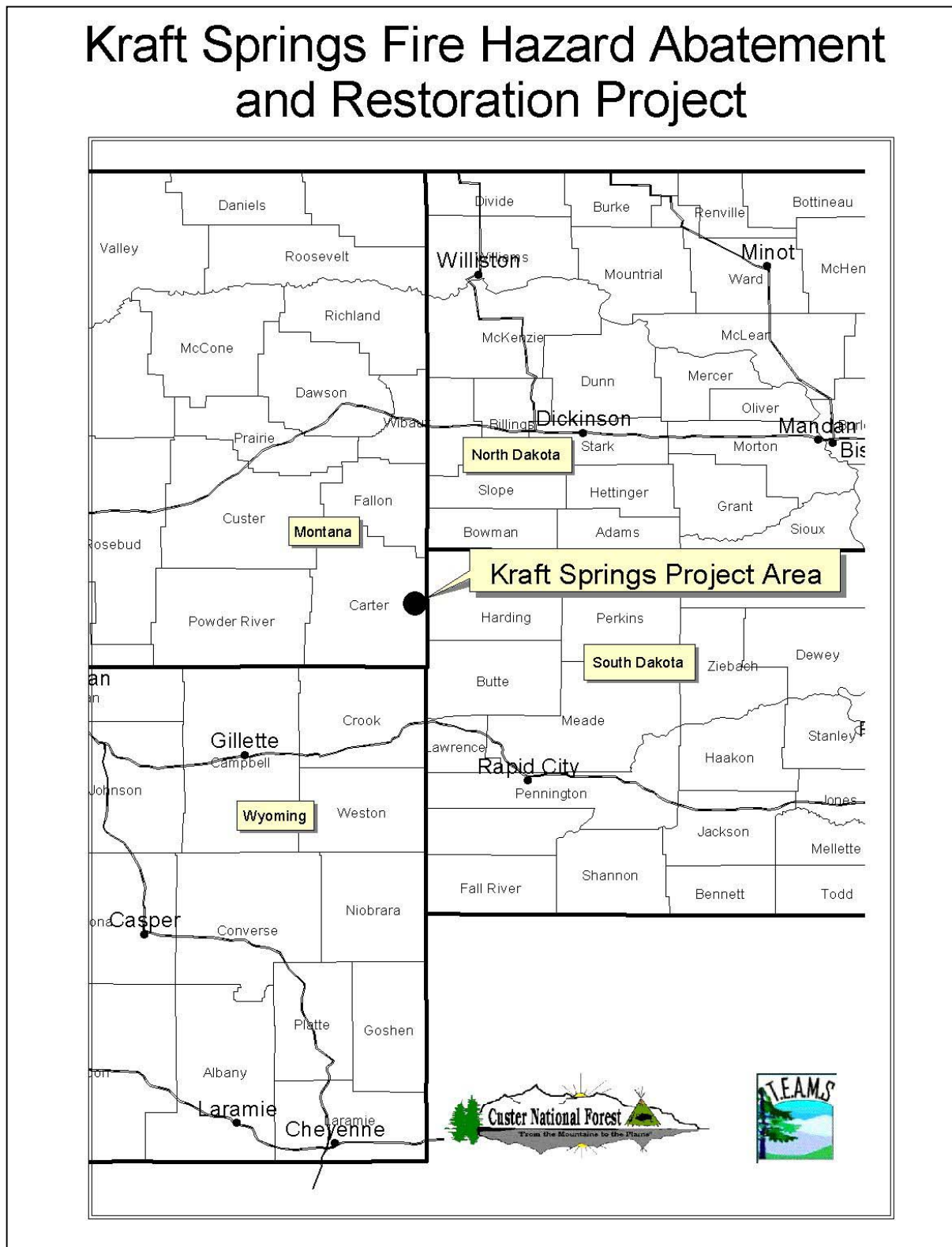


Figure vi-1b: Kraft Springs Project, general locale map

